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**NOAA Honors Baxter's Doris Lowe for Contributions to
National Weather Service Volunteer Observer Program**

Recognizing outstanding service to America, NOAA's National Weather Service has named rural Baxter, Ky., resident Doris Lowe a 2009 recipient of the John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is the agency's second most prestigious and only 25 are presented this year to cooperative weather observers from around the country.

"Cooperative observers are the bedrock of weather data collection and analysis," said Shawn Harley, meteorologist in charge of NOAA's Jackson, Ky., National Weather Service office. "Numerous technological breakthroughs have brought great benefits to the Nation in terms of better forecasts and warnings. But without the century-long accumulation of accurate weather observations taken by volunteer observers, scientists could not begin to adequately describe the climate of the United States. We cannot thank Doris Lowe enough for her years of service to America."

Harley will present the award and certificates to Lowe during a 10 a.m ceremony at Court House in Harlan.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program has given scientists and researchers continuous observational data since the program's inception more than a century ago. Today nearly 12,000 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Lowe began her volunteer duties Oct. 1, 1987, continuing a family tradition that dates back to 1940. Lowe's father Homer Nolan was the official observer at the site for 47 years before turning it over to Lowe Oct. 1, 1987. Reporting daily temperature, precipitation, snowfall, snow depth and river levels Lowe and Nolan provided critical river and weather data for the Cumberland River at the confluence of the Poor, Martin and Clover Forks between Pine Mountain and the Cumberland Mountain Plateau. Lowe has provided nearly 8,000 daily observations and combined with her father for more than 24,400 reports. The second generation Holm recipient credited Nolan as her observing inspiration. Nolan also earned the Thomas Jefferson Award, NOAA's highest recognition for cooperative observers.

Continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather and a basis for predicting future trends. Data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves.

Many historic figures maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. The rest is history.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov>

National Weather Service Jackson: <http://www.weather.gov/jkl>